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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [PTER](#) [EFIN](#) [ECON](#) [EG](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: IRAQ: ENCOURAGING ADDITIONAL EGYPTIAN AND ARAB
LEAGUE ENGAGEMENT

REF: A. STATE 181228 (NOTAL)

[1](#)B. CAIRO 3924 (NOTAL)
[1](#)C. CAIRO 5799 (NOTAL)
[1](#)D. CAIRO 4168 (NOTAL)

CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR FRANCIS RICCIARDONE FOR REASONS 1.4
(B) AND (D).

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (S) EGYPT'S ENGAGEMENT ON IRAQ, BOTH BILATERALLY AND MULTILATERALLY, IS QUIET BUT CONSISTENT. PER REFTELS, EGYPT IS IN FREQUENT COMMUNICATION WITH IRAQI GOVERNMENT LEADERS, HOSTS HIGH-LEVEL IRAQI DELEGATIONS, AND WILL DEEPEN BILATERAL TIES AS THE SECURITY SITUATION IN IRAQ PERMITS. EGYPT MAINTAINS A SMALL DIPLOMATIC PRESENCE IN IRAQ SINCE THE ABDUCTION AND MURDER OF ITS ENVOY TO BAGHDAD, WHILE BAGHDAD HAS YET TO POST AN AMBASSADOR TO CAIRO. THE GOE IS A STRONG AND POSITIVE VOICE WITHIN THE ARAB LEAGUE CONTEXT, ENCOURAGING EFFORTS AT RECONCILIATION AMONG IRAQI GROUPS. ENGAGEMENT BY BOTH EGYPT AND THE LEAGUE COULD CERTAINLY INCREASE, ALTHOUGH WE DOUBT OUR ENTREATIES ON THIS POINT WILL BE MORE CONVINCING THAN EGYPT'S OWN ASSESSMENTS OF ITS POLITICAL AND SECURITY INTERESTS THERE. EGYPTIAN BUSINESSES CONTINUE TO SEEK INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN IRAQ, AND EGYPT IS CURRENTLY IN CONSULTATIONS WITH A LONDON-BASED FIRM ON THE ISSUE OF FORGIVING IRAQI DEBTS. END SUMMARY.

EGYPT SUPPORTS IRAQI GOVERNMENT

[1](#)2. (S) EGYPT IS CLOSELY MONITORING EVENTS IN IRAQ, PRIMARILY VIA THE EGYPTIAN GENERAL INTELLIGENCE SERVICE. CAIRO REMAINS OPPOSED TO MILITARY COMMITMENTS IN IRAQ, BUT HAS KEPT ITS OFFER ON THE TABLE TO TRAIN IRAQI POLICE AND MILITARY ON EGYPTIAN SOIL. GOE LEADERS ARE IN TOUCH WITH IRAQI COUNTERPARTS, AND ARE OPEN TO A VISIT TO CAIRO BY PRIME MINISTER MALIKI AND OTHER IRAQI LEADERS. CAIRO HAS BEEN A LEADER AMONG ARAB STATES IN DIPLOMATIC ENGAGEMENT WITH SUCCESSIVE IRAQI GOVERNMENTS. ITS INTELLIGENCE SERVICES WORK WITH US AND THE GOI IN THE COUNTER-TERRORISM FIELD. ACCORDING TO MFA DEPUTY ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR ARAB AFFAIRS AMAL MORAD, EGYPT IS CURRENTLY WORKING WITH A PRIVATE LONDON-BASED ACCOUNTING FIRM HIRED BY IRAQ TO CALCULATE EXACT FIGURES OWED BY THE GOI TO THE GOE AND GOE-OWNED COMPANIES, AND ON REMITTANCES TO EGYPTIAN WORKERS. MORAD COULD NOT CITE A PRECISE FIGURE, BUT STATED THAT THE FIGURE WAS "CONSIDERABLE FOR EGYPT, BUT SMALL IN COMPARISON TO OTHER DEBTORS;" PROBABLY IN THE "HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS." ONCE THE FIRM CALCULATES FIGURES, THE GOE AND THE GOI COULD NEGOTIATE TERMS OF DEBT FORGIVENESS. MORAD WAS NOT AWARE OF ANY MAJOR ASSETS OWNED BY THE GOI THAT REMAINED IN EGYPT.

ASKED ABOUT UPCOMING POLITICAL EVENTS OR SENIOR IRAQI VISITS, MORAD SAID THAT FOREIGN MINISTERS OF IRAQ AND ITS NEIGHBORS WOULD MEET SOON IN CAIRO. THERE WAS NO NEWS OF A VISIT TO EGYPT BY IRAQI PM MALIKI, ALTHOUGH MEMBERS OF IRAQ'S NATIONAL RECONCILIATION COMMITTEE WERE CURRENTLY IN EGYPT TALKING WITH IRAQI EXPATRIATES.

ARAB LEAGUE REMAINS ENGAGED

13. (C) DUE IN PART TO EGYPTIAN PRESSURE, THE ARAB LEAGUE CONTINUES ITS "RECONCILIATION" PROJECT WORK IN IRAQ, SPEARHEADED BY MOROCCAN DIPLOMAT MOKHTAR LAMANI. THE LEAGUE HAS HOSTED NUMEROUS DIPLOMATIC GATHERINGS ON IRAQ, AND HAS OFFERED MORAL SUPPORT TO SUCCESSIVE IRAQI GOVERNMENTS. LEAGUE INFLUENCE OVER ITS MEMBER STATES' POLICIES ON IRAQ, HOWEVER, IS SCANT. THE LEAGUE HAS BEEN ACCUSED BY IRAQ'S SHIA AND KURDISH LEADERS AS BIASED IN FAVOR OF IRAQI SUNNIS, A CHARGE THAT HAS STYMIED EFFORTS BY THE LEAGUE TO SUPPORT NATIONAL RECONCILIATION. SECRETARY GENERAL AMRE MOUSSA REMAINS IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH BOTH SENIOR GOI LEADERS AND POLITICAL PLAYERS INSIDE IRAQ, INCLUDING NON-TERRORIST RESISTANCE LEADERS. EGYPT STRONGLY INFLUENCES MOUSSA'S ACTIONS ON IRAQ.

RESPONSES TO REF A QUESTIONS

14. (S) QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (REF A):

- QUESTION: WHAT WOULD BE REQUIRED FOR THE GOE TO BE MORE ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN IRAQ? WHAT WILL GOE REQUIRE OF IRAQ BEFORE IT IS WILLING TO INCREASE SUPPORT?

- RESPONSE: THE SECURITY SITUATION IN IRAQ IS THE SINGLE BIGGEST IMPEDIMENT TO GREATER GOE INVOLVEMENT IN IRAQ. EGYPT WILL NOT SEND TROOPS TO IRAQ.

- QUESTION: WHAT STRATEGY SHOULD THE USG TAKE IN ENGAGING GOE TO ENCOURAGE GREATER SUPPORT?

- RESPONSE: WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY ARGUED THAT THE IRAQIS WEAKEN THEIR OWN CASE IN CAIRO BY NOT SENDING AN AMBASSADOR HERE WITH BOTH STATURE AND SKILL. THE U.S. SHOULD PRESS THE GOI TO SEND A CAPABLE, SENIOR-LEVEL ENVOY TO BEGIN CHANGING ATTITUDES OF BOTH THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL OPINION SHAPERS. AN ARTICULATE IRAQI SPOKESMAN IN CAIRO COULD ALSO PROMOTE IRAQI VIEWS TO PAN ARAB PRESS ORGANS.

- QUESTION: WHAT SPECIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS - FINANCIAL, POLITICAL, SECURITY, OR OTHER - COULD THE GOE MAKE TO IRAQ, ASSUMING IT WAS APPROACHED IN THE CORRECT MANNER AND AT AN APPROPRIATE LEVEL?

- RESPONSE: EGYPT HAS CONSISTENTLY TURNED DOWN ENTREATIES TO CONTRIBUTE TROOPS FOR IRAQ, AND IS UNLIKELY TO CHANGE DIRECTION ON THIS ISSUE. THE AREA WHERE COOPERATION IS GREATEST, AND PERHAPS CAPABLE OF FURTHER EXPANSION, IS IN THE COUNTER-TERROR AND INTELLIGENCE-SHARING FIELDS. EGYPT IS WILLING TO TRAIN TROOPS OR POLICE ON EGYPTIAN SOIL.

- QUESTION: WHAT ARE THE GOE'S OPINIONS ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IRAQ AND SYRIA? HOW WILL THE HOST GOVERNMENT PERCEIVE ANY CHANGE, EITHER FOR THE BETTER OR WORSE, IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IRAQ AND SYRIA? HOW COULD THE GOE BE USED TO INFLUENCE SYRIAN BEHAVIOR TOWARD IRAQ?

- RESPONSE: EGYPT'S STRAINED RELATIONS WITH SYRIA STEM FROM DEEP DISAGREEMENTS OVER THE LATTERS RELATIONS WITH THE IRANIS, PALESTINIAN MILITANTS, AND HIZBOLLAH IN LEBANON. EGYPT KNOWS THE NEGATIVE ROLE SYRIA PLAYS VIS-A-VIS IRAQ, BUT HAS LIMITED LEVERAGE OVER DAMASCUS, AS WITNESSED IN OTHER AREAS. PRESIDENT MUBARAK HAS REPEATEDLY URGED PRESIDENT ASAD TO CURB THE TRAFFIC OF FOREIGN FIGHTERS TO IRAQ, BUT ALSO URGES US TO ESTABLISH OUR OWN CHANNELS TO DAMASCUS.

- QUESTION: WHAT ARE THE GOE'S OPINIONS ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IRAQ AND IRAN? HOW WILL THE HOST GOVERNMENT PERCEIVE ANY CHANGE, EITHER FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE, IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IRAQ AND IRAN? HOW COULD THE GOE BE USED TO INFLUENCE IRANIAN BEHAVIOR TOWARD IRAQ?

- RESPONSE: THE GOE'S RELATIONS WITH TEHRAN (NO FORMAL TIES) ARE MARKED BY ENMITY AND SUSPICION. PRESIDENT MUBARAK AND HIS SENIOR MINISTERS ARE CLEAR ON THIS POINT. THE EGYPTIANS FEAR IRANIAN INROADS INTO IRAQ, AND ARE CONCERNED BY EXPANDING IRANIAN INFLUENCE ON EGYPT'S DOORSTEP IN GAZA, WHICH THEY SEE AS A DIRECT RESULT OF U.S. POLICY IN IRAQ.
RICCIARDONE